

Forcura Helps VNS Health Optimize Revenue Cycle Management and Administrative Savings During a Pandemic and Beyond



Impact at a Glance:

➤ **\$90K** | Saved \$90,000 by eliminating temporary staffing services

↑ **25%** | 80% of orders returned within 30 days, up from 55%

↓ **\$8M** | Accounts receivable slashed by 50% in one year, from \$16 million to \$8 million



Superior platform stability and security

Overview & Challenge:

VNS Health has a long-established relationship with New Yorkers. Founded in 1893, VNS Health serves the five boroughs of New York City and Nassau, Suffolk and Westchester counties. With approximately 40,000 patients in its care on any given day, VNS Health is one of the largest not-for-profit home- and community-based healthcare organizations in the United States. VNS Health's more than 10,500 staff collectively speak more than 50 languages and serve a diverse array of patients.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, VNS Health used a well-known content management software vendor to perform documentation processes and other services and link staff to the organization's electronic health record (EHR), Homecare Homebase. Employees had a number of issues with the software, resulting in inefficiencies in their documentation efforts.

Issues included:



Prolonged system downtimes



Insufficient customer service



A lack of visibility into processes and teams



A lack of data with which to analyze and chart overall progress



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SUSAN CAPUTO, SVP, Business Development

"Our downtimes alone were challenging," says VNS Health's Susan Caputo, SVP, Business Development. "We would sometimes have to ask staff to work overtime, just so we could get the patients into the system."

Mis-routing of documents that had to be signed by physicians also happened on occasion, adds Robert Orlando, VP, Application & Integration Services at VNS Health. "Luckily, we were able to resolve it," he says, "but it definitely was not a positive experience."

Solution

It became clear that VNS Health needed to replace the existing software with a better option, and in 2019 it partnered with Forcura to implement a new platform that offered enhanced capabilities. Neither organization could have predicted that the scheduled implementation date would fall within the first peak of a worldwide health crisis, or that the adoption of Forcura would play a pivotal role in helping VNS Health navigate such an unprecedented year for healthcare delivery.

In April 2020, while the coronavirus was throwing the entire healthcare industry into disarray, VNS Health officially launched Forcura's solutions platform. The value of having undergone proper preparation, followed by a well-supported transition, was perhaps never more critical for success than in this case. Months earlier, a small Forcura team had traveled to VNS Health's Manhattan headquarters for initial assessments. Afterward, representatives from the two organizations met virtually twice a week to help VNS Health plan its training and implementation strategy.

Virtual capabilities became particularly crucial when Covid-19 no longer permitted an anticipated on-site launch. Forcura's experience with remote onboarding, its knowledge of integrating with EHRs like Homecare Homebase, and its ability to devote resources for continual support all combined to help VNS Health achieve a smooth transition.

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SALVATORE BASTARDI,
VP, Corporate
Administrative Services

"Forcura's remote training of our staff during the pandemic was extraordinary," says VNS Health's Salvatore Bastardi, VP, Corporate Administrative Services. "In addition, the amount of one-on-one training that was done enabled the Physician Order Unit team to learn and accept the system easily." Salvatore adds that his own staff deserves recognition too, and he commends them for taking ownership of the training and absorbing all the information.

Forcura's onboarding team notes that active participation on the part of staff was prevalent throughout VNS Health, from discovery to launch, and that this contributed greatly to a relatively seamless process. Previous difficulties with software implementations had made VNS Health's leaders acutely aware of potential pitfalls along the way, so they formed an internal advocacy group to ensure that the right questions were asked, all perspectives were considered, and teams were kept well-informed.

As Forcura's Senior Implementation Consultant Meghan MacGrogan acknowledges, "VNS Health was dedicated to sending out change management communications every step of the way. They knew implementation would go well if their end users were prepared. This, in my opinion, is one of the biggest reasons why the implementation was so successful."

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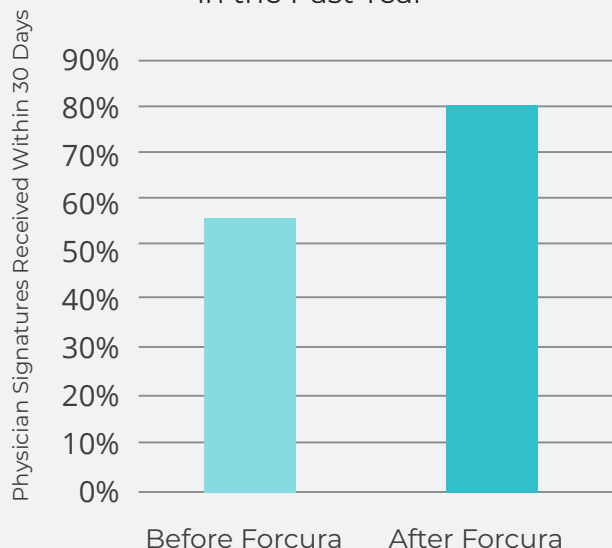
MEGHAN MACGROGAN,
Senior Implementation Consultant
 forcura

Results

Throughout 2020, as the pandemic caused VNS Health's patient volumes to fluctuate greatly along with the number of healthy clinicians available to treat them, the flexibility and transparency of Forcura's platform enabled VNS Health administrators to keep pace with documentation workflows. Equally as significant were Forcura's enhanced safeguards against malware and the rare occurrences of downtime. These new reliabilities allowed VNS Health's clinicians to focus on providing optimal care to their patients, while back-end administrators saw opportunities to identify root causes behind long-standing pain points.

By having clear visibility into the intake and orders processes, team leaders were able to discern where inconsistent practices and gaps in oversight created operational bottlenecks. Working diligently over several months, management was able to adjust staff and modify processes appropriately to optimize workflows. Furthermore, eliminating redundancies allowed VNS Health to reallocate permanent employees and dismiss several temporary workers and an outside service—changes that resulted in an annual savings of \$90,000.

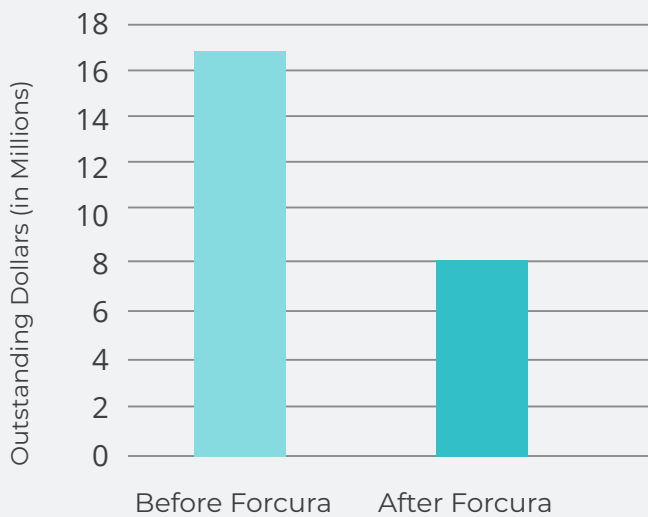
Orders Management Performance
in the Past Year



In addition, the improved accuracy of Forcura's intake process helped staff verify up to 98% of all physician contact information. Orders management also improved significantly as the ability to track signing physicians led to higher accountability, more effective physician outreach and shorter turnaround times. VNS Health now retrieves physician signatures at a rate of 80% within 30 days, as opposed to 55-60% within the same time period a year ago.

This streamlining also accelerated collections in accounts receivable, which had roughly \$16 to \$17 million in outstanding balances prior to implementation of the Forcura platform.

Orders Management Performance in the Past Year



This figure dropped 50% to just \$8 million in the past year, allowing many more patient cases to be fully reimbursed.

Additionally, Salvatore Bastardi notes that the analytics available in Forcura's platform have provided further insights and opportunities for ongoing improvements. Using a feature to track staffs' caseloads, for instance, his team can see where volumes are fluctuating and assign new cases accordingly. Where once these calibrations might have taken months to work out, they now require only a couple of days. "There's no question that without this data, we couldn't be doing half of what we're doing right now," adds Salvatore.

A Unique Case with Stellar Results

There are many factors that made Forcura's experience with VNS Health different than that of most other clients. VNS Health's patient volume, its previous vendor experiences, the full investment of its leadership and the unique timing of its integration combined to present both challenges and opportunities to realize meaningful change in care coordination and continuity. Since launching Forcura, VNS Health reports that its staff has a better understanding of the system and what their roles are in expediting referrals, orders, billing and, most importantly, patient care. They are far less frustrated with operations, and work in a more collaborative way to accomplish their goals.

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ROBERT ORLANDO,
VP, Application &
Integration Services

Says Robert Orlando, "I feel a very strong commitment and partnership with Forcura. We know who to call if we have questions, and we can be confident that there are numerous people there who will answer them. I also find that the platform is robust, modern and flexible. It's simple to use, and has provided us with a path to meet and even exceed our key metrics in obtaining signed physician orders. We also now have a very reliable interface to process referrals into HCHB."

As VNS Health looks beyond the challenges of the past year, its prospects appear brighter than ever. It now has the technology it needs as well as the ongoing support of a committed partner, positioning the organization to serve what may become its highest patient census yet, with all the efficiency and sophistication of a modern healthcare provider aiming to deliver the safest, highest-quality care possible.